

The
R E S T O R E D
C H U R C H

By WILLIAM E. BERRETT

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE GROWTH AND DOCTRINES OF
THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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uel Brannan were detailed to meet the Battalion and conduct its members to their destination. As their term of enlistment had expired by the time of reaching Salt Lake, they were later mustered out of service at that place.

1847 The company reached Fort Bridger July 9. From here the Pioneers left the Oregon Trail and followed the dim trail left by the wagons of the Donner party the year before. This route was called "Mr. Hasting's new route to the Bay of San Francisco," and was the most direct route into Salt Lake Valley. July 10 the company met Miles Goodyear, who was acting as guide for a party traveling East from San Francisco. Goodyear had what he termed a farm at the mouth of Ogden Canyon, on the site of the present city of Ogden. Respecting Salt Lake Valley as a promising place of settlement,

"He, too," says Erastus Snow, "was unable to give us any hope; on the contrary, he told us of hard frosts, cold climate; that it was difficult to produce grain and vegetables in any of this mountain region. The same answer was given to him as to Mr. Bridger, "Give us time and we will show you!"³⁶

To Salt Lake Valley

From the Green River the camp had considerable sickness from "mountain fever." President Young was severely stricken and remained behind at Bear River, with eight wagons, while the main company moved forward. Orson Pratt was sent ahead with 23 wagons and 42 men to lay out the route. The route chosen followed closely that taken by the Donner party into Salt Lake Valley, as Goodyear had reported the Weber Canyon impassable with wagons. Orson Pratt followed down Echo Canyon and, after some difficulty, passed through East Canyon and over "Big

³⁶Erastus Snow's Journal, entry for July 10.

“Mountain” into the head of what is now called Parley’s Canyon. From here the road led over “Little Mountain” in Emigration Canyon, called by them “Last Creek.” From the top of Big Mountain, on July 19, the first sight of Salt Lake Valley had been obtained. The main body of Pioneers was now close behind Orson Pratt’s camp. President Young sent word to Orson Pratt to proceed on into Salt Lake Valley, bear northward, and commence the planting of potatoes, as the season was late and he was desirous of raising seed for another year. Accordingly, Orson Pratt moved for-



Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow give a shout upon viewing the Salt Lake Valley. (One of the pieces of sculpture from the "This is the Place" Monument.)

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that preservation would require the conquering of a desert.

Except for the desire of the Saints to exercise their faith unmolested, the Great Basin would likely not have been settled in 1847, or perhaps for many years afterward. The history of attempts at establishing agricultural communities in similar areas of the United States, where settlement was not prompted by such religious faith, has been a story of failure. This phase of the settlement of the Great Basin will be given in greater detail in a later chapter.

1847 Founding the First City

When the Saints erected their tents on the present site of Salt Lake City, the land into which they had come technically belonged to Mexico. The treaty of peace with that country, whereby the Great Basin became part of the United States, was not signed until February 2, 1848. In actuality the region belonged to no nation. No governmental officers had ever lived in the territory, nor had the administration of any law been attempted there. The Mexicans called the region upper California, and the Mexican Governor at Monterey was technically its administrative officer, but that is as far as the attempt of government had gone. Miles Goodyear had obtained from the Mexican Government a grant of land of considerable extent where Ogden is now situated, but Goodyear lived alone with his gardens, undisturbed by government or law.

The Saints must of necessity establish their own law and their own government. On the first Sabbath day spent in the Valley, religious services were held in the forenoon and afternoon, and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered. Several of the Apostles

spoke. The law of the Lord was declared to be the law of the land. "The brethren were exhorted," says Wilford Woodruff, "to hearken to counsel, do away with selfishness, live humbly and keep the commandments of God, that they might prosper in the land."³

On that day Brigham Young laid down the principles which should govern the appropriation of property in the valley. Out of fairness to the thousands of Saints who were yet upon the plains, the President was determined that none should seize upon and monopolize the resources of the valley.

"No man should buy or sell land. Every man should have his land measured off to him for city and farming purposes, what he could till. He might till it as he pleased, but he should be industrious and take care of it."⁴

This land law is identical to that inaugurated at Garden Grove and Mount Pisgah, where Brigham Young had added, "that if a man would not till his land it should be taken from him."⁵

The law was also laid down that the timber in the mountains belonged to the community and could not be appropriated by individuals. This timber must be conserved and only the dead wood cut for fuel.

The water also belonged to the community. A man might appropriate that which he could profitably use on his land for irrigation, but no more. This theory of the use of water gradually developed into what is called the "appropriation theory of water rights," and is the basis of irrigation law in nearly all the intermountain country today.

No attempt was made in 1847 to set up a civil government.

Before definitely selecting the site of

³Woodruff's Journal, entry for July 25, 1847.

⁴Wilford Woodruff's Journal, entry for July 25, 1847.

⁵History of Brigham Young, Ms., p. 110.

were converted might gather. It was a comprehensive scheme of colonization, unique in the history of the world.

Without the religious motive it would have failed. Often the feeling of duty alone kept men and women battling for existence against mighty odds. Sometimes even that was not sufficient, and a colony would be abandoned.

An expedition leaving Salt Lake City to found a new colony had an interesting organization. It had its Bishopric, or Presidency, which would preside in the new settlement; its blacksmith, tailor, harness maker, tinsmith, miller, carpenter, mason, farmers, etc. If possible it contained a doctor, a merchant, and a skilled mechanic. It was a community prepared to labor at more or less designated tasks, and while men were not tied to follow the trade they professed, the great majority did so, and helped promote a harmonious and self-sustaining community. The few colonizing failures were not the results of an inadequate personnel, but because of an over-estimation of the life-sustaining possibilities of the site selected.

Within twenty years of the founding of Salt Lake City nearly every present settlement of importance in the Great Basin was begun. Into these settlements flowed the great migration of converts in the succeeding years.

The earliest settlements were started without the organization referred to above.

During the winter of 1847-8 the sites for later settlements were occupied by individuals charged with the care of wintering large herds of cattle. Thomas Grover settled on Deuel Creek, at what is now Centerville. Perrigrene Sessions, accompanied by Samuel Brown, settled on East Mill Creek at what is now Bountiful. Heber C. Haight, with one of his

sons, wintered on the present site of Farmington.

In the Spring of 1848, Captain James Brown, formerly of the Mormon Battalion, purchased the Goodyear tract of land at the mouth of Weber Canyon for \$1,950 cash, which had been collected as Battalion wages and authorized by the members for that purpose. On September 3, 1849, Brigham Young selected the site for the present city of Ogden. A wall was built to enclose the settlement. The number of settlers increased so rapidly that in 1851 it was divided into two wards. Also in 1851, the colonization movement to the north reached Box Elder Creek, where Brigham City was settled by Welsh and Scandinavian emigrants under Simeon A. Carter. Logan, in Cache Valley, was occupied in 1859.

Meanwhile, settlements were extending to the South. On March 17, 1849, a company of one hundred fifty souls, organized with John S. Higbee as president and Isaac Higbee and Dimick B. Huntington as counselors, moved into Utah valley to a site two miles northwest of the present Provo City. Here they hastily built Fort Utah, as the Indians were gathering in large numbers, and warnings were being received from Fort Bridger that an uprising was impending. In September, the settlement was visited by the First Presidency, who selected the present site of Provo for a city.

After a treaty of peace had been negotiated with the Indians, the settlement of Battlecreek (Pleasant Grove), American Fork, Evansville (Lehi), Springville, and Payson, were established.

Isaac Morley arrived in Sanpete County with two hundred twenty-four souls, in 1849. Manti was selected a site